

THE CLAIMS:

The following is a complete listing of the claims in this application, and replaces all earlier versions and all earlier listings of the claims:

Claims 1 - 12. (canceled)

Claim 13. (canceled).

14. (currently amended): ~~[[The]]~~ A virtual space presentation apparatus according to claim 13 comprising:

a virtual space image generation unit adapted to generate an image of a virtual space, according to a viewpoint position and a visual axis direction which are set in the virtual space;

a map image generation unit adapted to generate a map image representing a region around the viewpoint position, according to the viewpoint position and the visual axis direction;

a view image displaying unit adapted to display the generated image of the virtual space;

a map image displaying unit adapted to display the generated map image;
and

a viewpoint position and visual axis direction input unit, which is used to operate the viewpoint position and the visual axis direction, and which is fixed in a position on said map image displaying unit,

wherein said map image generation unit generates an image of a plan-view map that looks down the region around the viewpoint position from a position immediately above the viewpoint.

15. (currently amended): The apparatus according to claim [[13]] 14, wherein said map image generation unit generates the map image as a bird's-eye view.

16. (currently amended): [[The]] A virtual space presentation apparatus according to claim 13 comprising:

a virtual space image generation unit adapted to generate an image of a virtual space, according to a viewpoint position and a visual axis direction which are set in the virtual space;

a map image generation unit adapted to generate a map image representing a region around the viewpoint position, according to the viewpoint position and the visual axis direction;

a view image displaying unit adapted to display the generated image of the virtual space;

a map image displaying unit adapted to display the generated map image;
and

a viewpoint position and visual axis direction input unit, which is used to operate the viewpoint position and the visual axis direction, and which is fixed in a position on said map image displaying unit,

wherein said viewpoint position and visual axis direction input unit is fixed in a position on a display screen of said map image displaying unit,

the position of said viewpoint position and visual axis direction input unit on the display screen is a viewpoint position of a map image displayed on the display screen, and

said map image displaying unit controls the viewpoint position and the visual axis direction, by scrolling a map image displayed on the display screen according to operation to said viewpoint position and visual axis direction input unit.

17. (currently amended): The apparatus according to claim [[13]] 14, said viewpoint position and visual axis direction input unit includes a trackball, a joystick, and a track pad.

18. (currently amended): A virtual space display method comprising the steps
of:

generating an image of a virtual space, according to a viewpoint position and a visual axis direction which are set in the virtual space;

generating a map image representing a region around the viewpoint position, according to the viewpoint position and the visual axis direction;

displaying the generated image of the virtual space by a view image displaying unit;

displaying the generated map image by a map image displaying unit; and

setting the viewpoint position and the visual axis direction, according to an instruction input from a viewpoint position and visual axis direction input unit fixed in a position on said map image displaying unit,

wherein said generating step includes generating an image of a plan-view map that looks down the region around the viewpoint position from a position immediately above the viewpoint.

19. (currently amended): A computer-readable storage medium storing a program for causing a computer to execute a virtual space display method of claim 18.

20. (new): A virtual space presentation method comprising the steps of:

generating an image of a virtual space, according to a viewpoint position and a visual axis direction which are set in the virtual space;

generating a map image representing a region around the viewpoint position, according to the viewpoint position and the visual axis direction;

displaying the generated image of the virtual space;

displaying the generated map image; and

using an input unit to operate the viewpoint position and the visual axis direction, and wherein the input unit is fixed in a position on a display unit that is used in said step of displaying the map image, and

wherein the position of the input unit on the display unit is a viewpoint position of a map image displayed on the display unit, and

wherein said step of displaying the map image displaying includes controlling the viewpoint position and the visual axis direction, by scrolling a map image displayed on the display unit according to operation to the viewpoint position and visual axis direction input unit.

21. (new): A computer-readable storage medium storing a program for causing a computer to execute a virtual space display method of claim 20.